

REMARKS

Overview of the Office Action

Claims 1 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,118,435 (“Fujita”).

Claims 4-6, 8, 12-14, and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Fujita in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,245,245 (“Goldenberg”).

Claims 3, 7, 11, 15, 17, and 18 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 3-6, 8-9, 17, and 18 have been amended.

Claims 2 and 10 have been previously canceled.

Claims 7 and 15 have now been canceled.

Claims 19 and 20 have been newly added.

Claims 1, 3-6, 8-9, 11-14, and 16-18 are now pending.

Allowable subject matter

The Office Action states that claims 3, 7, 11, 15, 17, and are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 7 has been canceled, and independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 7. Therefore, independent claim 1 is now allowable.

Claim 15 has been canceled, and independent claim 9 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 15. Therefore, independent claim 9 is now allowable.

Allowable claim 17 has been amended to include the subject matter of base claim 1 and to place it in independent form. Therefore, claim 17 is now allowable.

Allowable claim 18 has been amended to include the subject matter of base claim 9 and to place it in independent form. Therefore, claim 18 is now allowable.

New independent claim 19 includes the subject matter of original claim 1 and allowable claim 3. Therefore, claim 19 is allowable.

New independent claim 20 includes the subject matter of original claim 9 and allowable claim 11. Therefore, claim 20 is allowable.

Rejection of claims 1 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Office Action states that Fujita teaches all of Applicants' recited elements.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 7 and is now allowable. Independent claim 9 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 15 and is now allowable. Therefore, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) are now moot.

Rejection of claims 4-6, 8, 12-14, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action states that the combination of Fujita and Goldenberg teach all of Applicant's recited elements.

Amended independent claims 1 and 9 are, as discussed above, now allowable. Claims 4-6, 8, 12-14, and 16, which depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1 and 9, are therefore also now allowable.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, Applicants submit that the present application is now in full and proper condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable action to that effect, and early passage of the application to issue, are respectfully solicited.

A check in the amount \$600 is enclosed in payment for the additional of three independent claims in excess of three. If any additional fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application, it may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions, or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to facilitate an early resolution of any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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